

prejudice to their subsequent reintroduction into this or a future patent application.

Please amend claim 3 in the manner indicated, in accordance with 37 C.F.R. 1.121(b), i.e., bracketed material is deleted from the claim and underscored material is added thereto.

3. (Once amended) A dilator tube, comprising:

an elongate hollow tube for dilating an incision, said elongate hollow tube having an open free end;

a base member having a predetermined diameter fixedly secured to a proximal end of said elongate tube;

a [common] bore [means] formed in said [tube and said] base member for receiving said tube; [and]

a recess formed in a trailing end of said base member, said recess having a diameter slightly less than said predetermined diameter of said base member and said recess being in open communication with said bore and hence in open fluid communication with a trailing end of said tube;

a water port formed in said base member, said water port including a bore [means] formed therein in open fluid communication with the bore [means common to] formed in said tube [and said base member];

whereby irrigation fluid may be introduced to a surgical site through said water port and said [common] bore formed in said tube, said tube thereby providing the dual functions of dilating an incision and simultaneously delivering irrigation fluid to said surgical site.